

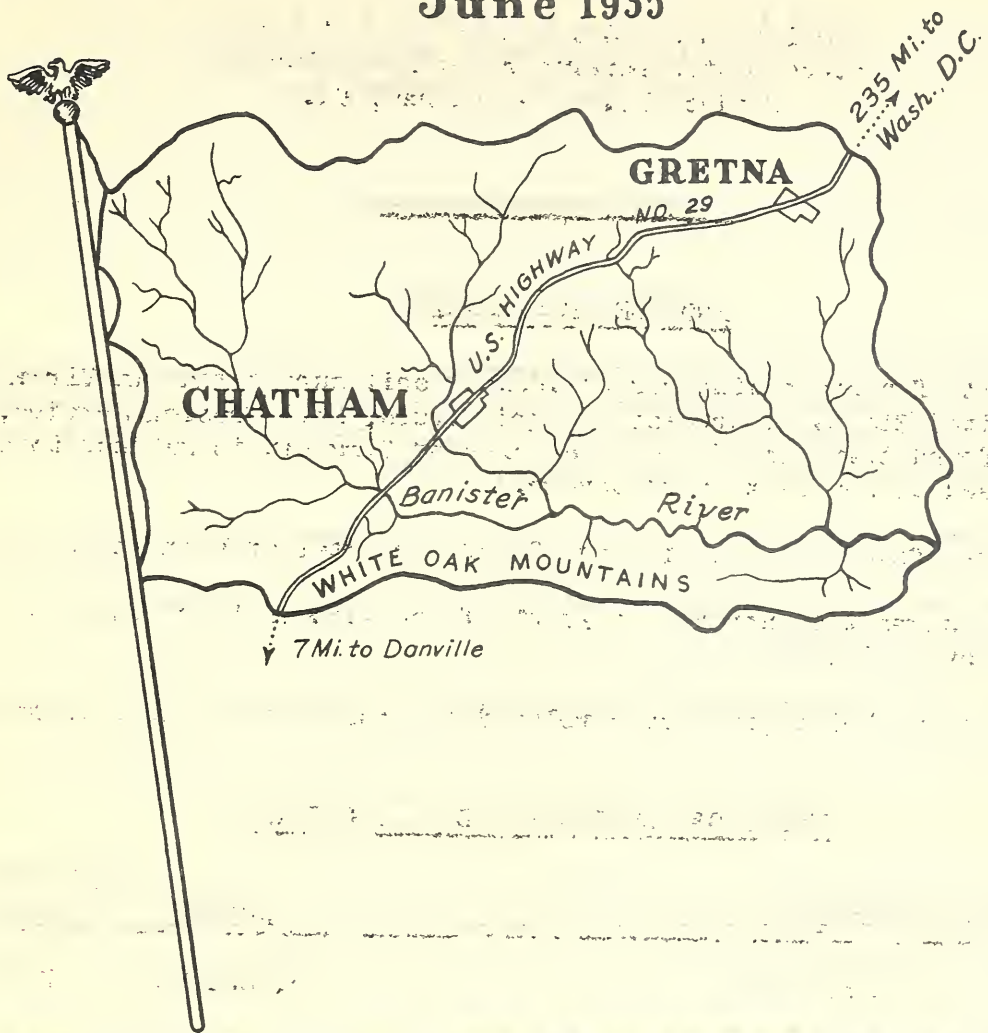
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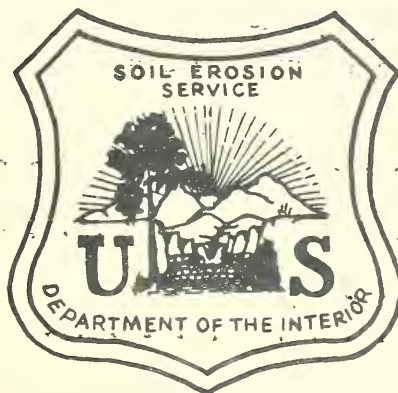


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June 1935



# Banister River Banner



VOLUME 1

CHATHAM, VIRGINIA

NUMBER 11

S O I L E R O S I O N S E R V I C E  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Project No. 22 - Chatham, Va.

EROSION IN VIRGINIA

As a result of a state wide reconnaissance soil survey made in Virginia by the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Erosion Service, it has been found that 62% of the total area of Virginia is subject to erosion classed as severe to very severe.

Gullyng was found to be active on 59% of the total area in the state.

The survey shows that approximately 3% of the land in this state is destroyed by gullyng.

The table shown below gives data related to erosion found in this state.

EXTENT OF EROSION FOUND IN VIRGINIA

EXTENT OF EROSION	ACRES	% OF TOTAL STATE
#1 Little or no erosion	9,633,498	38%
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#2 Severe to very Severe Erosion (25 to 75% surface lost)(approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the surface soil removed).	14,748,971	58%
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#3 Very severe erosion, over 75% of the surface soil lost. May also include losses of subsoil	1,009,941	4%
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Occasional gullyng . . . . .	14,374,725	56%
Severe gullyng or land destroyed by gullyng . . . . .	479,463	3%
Gullyng . . . . .	14,854,188	59%

## ENGINEERING

The cooperators in the Banister River area will be glad to learn that we have recently received a number of new tractors which will be used for terracing work during the coming summer. We are anxious to put these machines to work as soon as the grain is off the land so that we can get as much terracing done as possible before other crops are planted. Cooperators who have grain fields that they wish terraced should notify us as soon as the grain is harvested, so that the lay out crews can begin work on the field as soon as the grain is out.

It is doubtful if we will be able to terrace all of the fields from which grain is harvested between the time when it is harvested and the planting of other crops, but it will be possible to lay out the fields so that other crops can be planted leaving a strip for the terrace which can be planted to grass and hay crops after terraces are constructed.

Those fields which have already been terraced and on which grain is now growing will have to be prepared for other crops. In the preparation of the ground for other crops, it is important to see that the terrace height is not lowered and that the terrace channels are kept clear. In cases where the field will be completely plowed, it is well to review what was said in the May Banner. If there is any doubt as to how to break the land, call on one of the engineers working in your vicinity or at the Soil Conservation Office, Chatham, Virginia, and we will be glad to help with any of your problems.

We have been checking over a number of terrace outlet channels to see how they are standing up under the heavy rains which we have recently had. In most cases the work is standing up remarkably well, but it is important that each cooperator recognize his responsibility in helping maintain these channels. The channels are for the protection of your farms and must be constantly watched; and any damage or irregularities which occur in them should be carefully repaired before serious damage is done. In the same way terraces should be gone over after each hard rain and any places which appear to be low should be built up or any places where the water channel is silted up should be cleared out. In all of this work the saying "A stitch in time", might well be applied.

We are glad to announce that work is gradually getting under way in the Sandy River area. The new camp SCS-VA-2 is in, and several crews are at work. A number of terrace outlet channels and terrace outlet structures have been completed. Additional crews will be in the field shortly, and we feel that the work should progress rapidly through the summer.

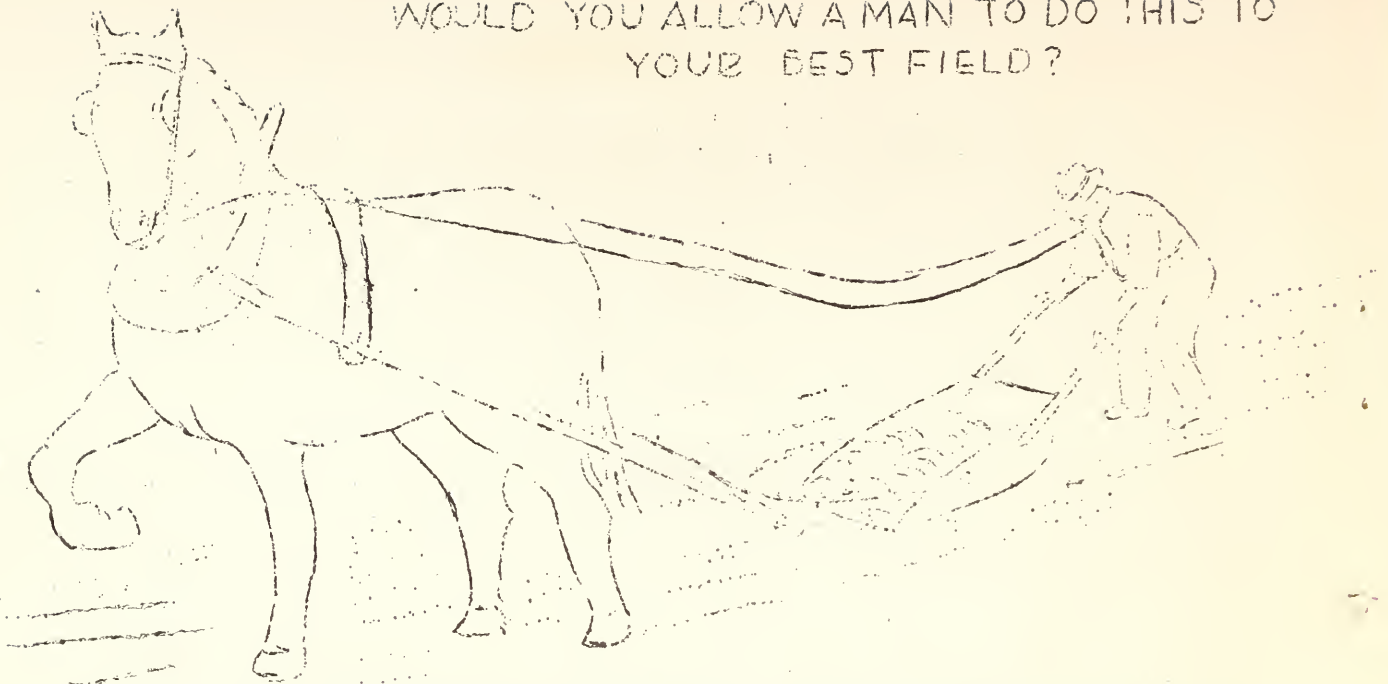
"TERRACING HELPS TO KEEP YOUR FARM AT HOME"

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Pittsylvania County Farmer to Soil Conservation Service men on a recent visit to this farmers home. "Young men you can not tell me anything about crop rotation or farming. Why, I have already worn out two farms."



WOULD YOU ALLOW A MAN TO DO THIS TO  
YOUR BEST FIELD?



UNCONTROLLED EROSION IS DOING A SIMILAR DAMAGE EVERY DAY

Mr. Farmer if some one should accuse you of inviting erosion on your farm what would you say to him? No doubt you would answer by "no". All right, let us take an inventory of a few of the common practices followed by farmers in the Southland.

1. Are you following the practice of plowing up and down the slope, and by so doing encouraging water to collect in each furrow and possibly starting a small gully?

2. Are you running your rows straight regardless of the slope, and by so doing forcing the water to collect in pockets or hollows thus inviting the forming of a gully? Or if the slope of each row is sufficiently steep each row may result in a gully.

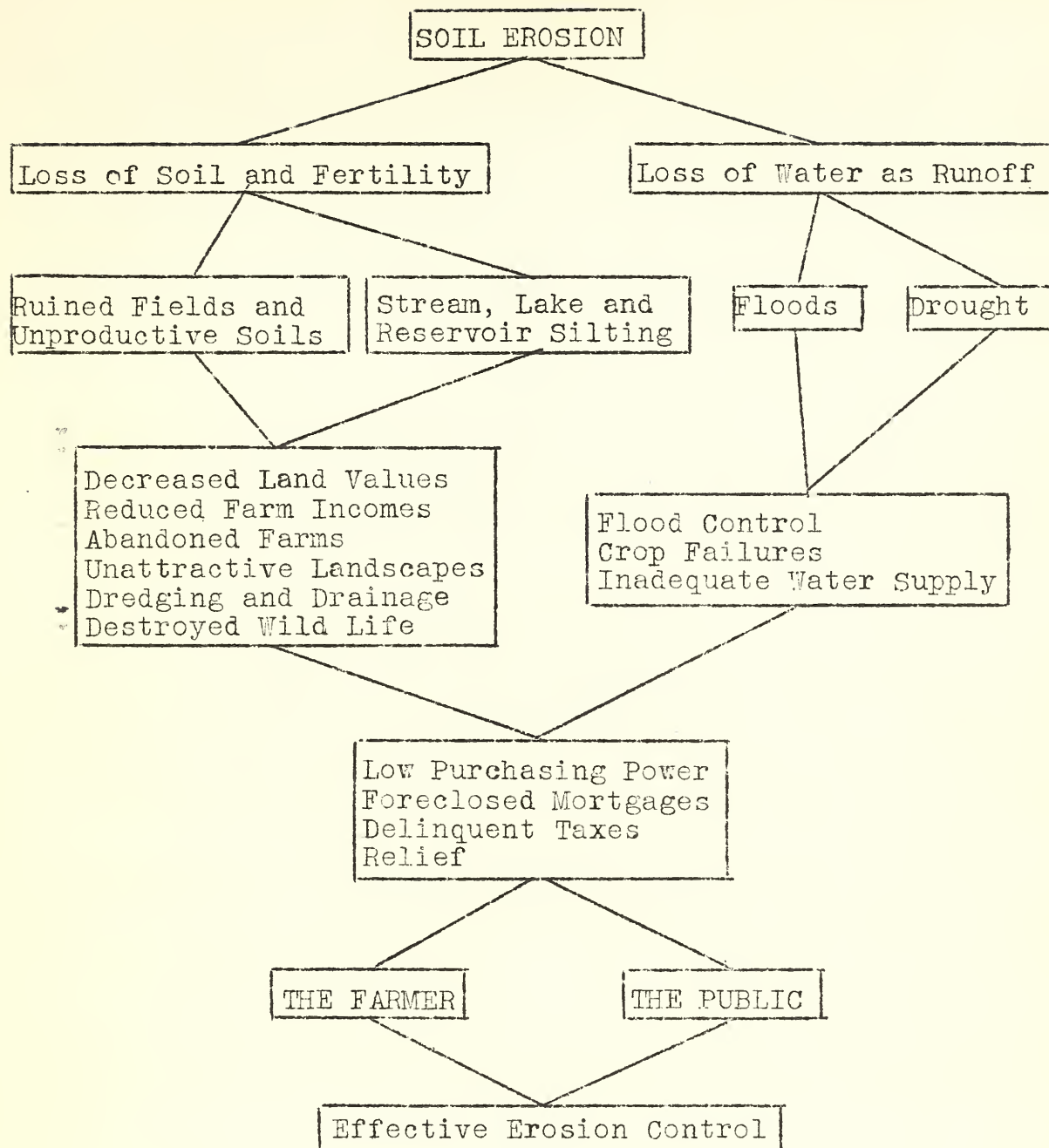
3. Do you follow the practice of shallow plowing with a one-horse plow, thus inviting sheet erosion?

4. Have you burned off or otherwise removed the organic matter from your soil, thus reducing the water holding capacity of the soil and forcing a greater run-off of water causing both sheet erosion and gullying?

5. Have you ceased to follow a rotation of crops producing a binding crop which holds the soil in place?

6. If a break or gully starts in your field, do you permit it to grow unmolested?

We invite you to study these and other similar practices on your farm. Let us have any solutions or suggestions, for you may correct these practices. These solutions or suggestions will be discussed in the next issue of the Banner.



Soil erosion affects the general public as well as the farmer.  
(Bulletin 349, Soil Erosion in Missouri, by L. D. Bayer.)

Effective erosion control can satisfactorily be practiced over most of the United States, as is indicated from the data obtained in the erosion reconnaissance survey recently completed.

Of a total land area of nearly two billion acres, 30 per cent was classified as being slightly eroded. The remaining 70 per cent was reported to vary from that land moderately eroded to that land totally destroyed by gullying. Perhaps the most striking information is revealed in the fact that more than 10 per cent of this total area has lost over 75 per cent of its top soil along with some portion of the subsoil.

#### CAMP SCS-VA-1-NEWS

During the month of May or from the 1st to the 23rd, inclusive, seven crews of ECW Enrollees, averaging 23 men each, constructed 721 permanent and temporary soil check dams and terrace structures in eroded gullies, terrace outlet channels and terrace ends. These structures are necessary to prevent the formation of enormous gullies and to assist in revegetation, where there is a large concentration of run-off water, such as in the case of terrace outlet channels and in the majority of the active gullies in the area. In addition to this work the camp boys seeded and sodded approximately 71,000 sq. yds. of terrace channels and gully banks and excavated 1,000 cu. yds. of soil in the construction of 8,700 lin. ft. of terrace outlet channels.

It looks as if the camp baseball team is going to have a very successful season. In eight starts this spring the fighting aggregation from Camp Casey has chalked up eight victories and no defeats. The latest victims to fall before the terrific slugging of the camp boys are C.C.C. Companies No. 1227 (Sandy River "Erosioneers") and No. 1220, located at Scottsburg, Va.

#### CAMP SCS-VA-2-NEWS

Company 1227 of the Civilian Conservation Corps moved into its new camp site in the afternoon of May 3rd. The camp site is located at Mount Cross on Highway #750, about 8 miles from Danville. The enrollees began immediately to clean up the camp site and pitch tents which will serve as living quarters until the new barracks, which are being constructed, are completed.

This company originally came from New York City, and has been stationed in one of the State Parks. Very few of the enrollees knew anything about Soil Erosion. They were very eager to get out and find out all about this new work.

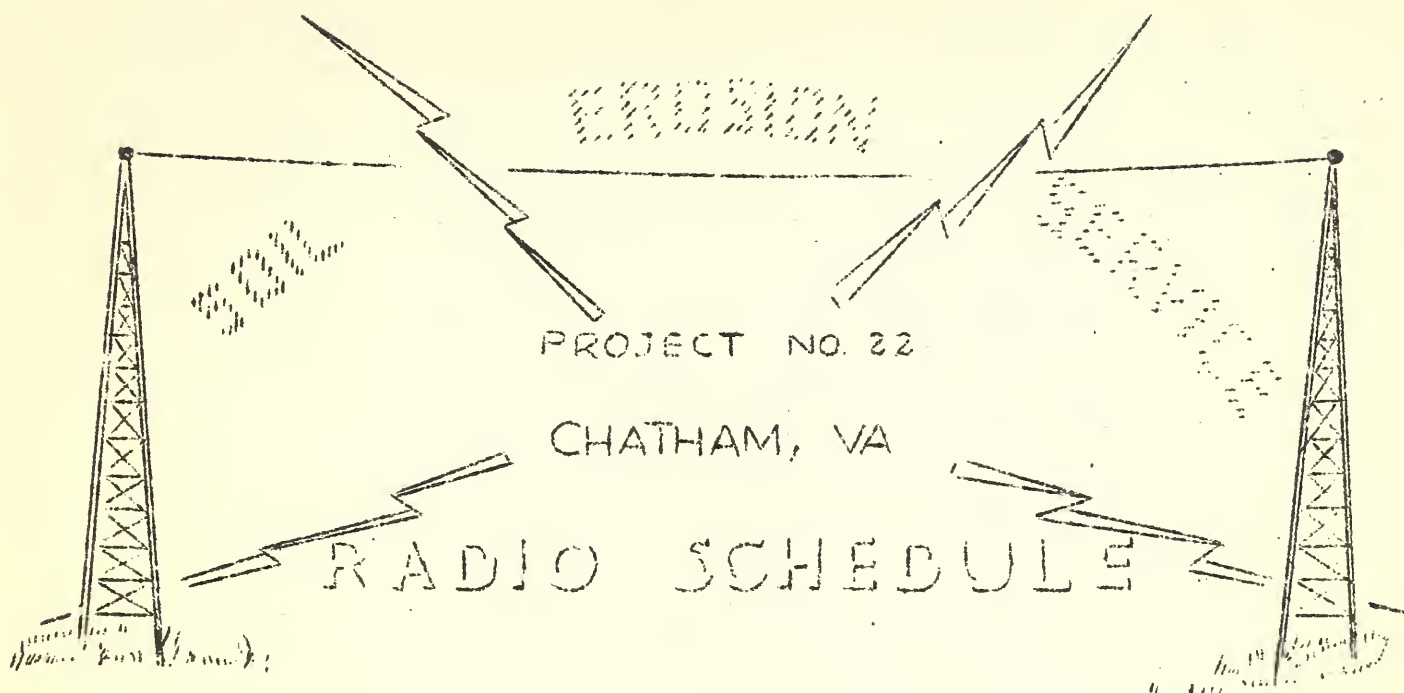
Monday, May 13th, about 85 of the enrollees were released to the Supervising Personnel for Soil Erosion Work. They were loaded on trucks and carried on a tour of inspection of some of the work completed in the Banister River area. They reported that the trip was worth very much to them.

This group has been building check dams and constructing terrace outlet channels on a few of the farms in the Sandy River area for the past two weeks. They have completed 80 check dams and terrace outlet structures and graded about 2,800 lin. ft. of terrace outlet channels. The area benefited to date is about 75 acres.

Erosion Control in this area is a very serious problem, because of the steep slopes. The outlet channels required are much longer and dams must be spaced closer together. This results in a higher cost per acre benefited than in an area in which the slopes are not as great. The cooperator can help us reduce the cost of controlling erosion on his farm by furnishing us with a team and wagon or plow when we are on that farm.

Will you help us to help you? ? ? ? ?





STATION W.R.V.A., RICHMOND, VA. - 3:00 to 3:15 P.M.

- June 6, 1935 - "Why Soils Erode", by T. C. Green,  
Soil Expert.
- June 13, 1935 - "The Soil Conservation Program", by  
G. M. Clarke, Chief Engineer.
- June 20, 1935 - "Farm Unemployment and Erosion Control",  
by T. L. Copley, Chief Agronomist.
- June 27, 1935 - "The Farmer and Erosion Control", by  
A. M. Moore, Agricultural Aide.

STATION W.B.T.M., DANVILLE, VA.- FARM BULLETIN HOUR 12:30 P.M.

- June 4, 1935 - "Soil Conservation Service Training Course",  
by J. W. Clay, Soils Department.
- June 11, 1935 - "Layman's View of the Soil Conservation Service",  
by Phil A. Mickel, Erosion Department.
- June 18, 1935 - "Forest Deterioration and Erosion Control",  
by L. T. Small, Junior Forester.
- June 25, 1935 - "Hazards of Soil Erosion", by J. A. Crosier,  
Erosion Department.

## PROTECT HARDWOOD STANDS FROM GRAZING

Many farmers throughout Virginia have open woodlands with no young growth coming in to restock the stand. These woods have lost their thrifty appearance, and have gradually become very low in timber production. In the past, farm woodlands have contributed materially to the farming enterprise in the state by supplying fuel wood, fence post, rough timbers, and some wood products for sale. Why not now?

Grazing of the farm woodlot is one of the practices that greatly reduces timber productiveness and should not be followed if the woods are to remain in a healthy condition. Some of the bad effects of over-grazing are: The soil is rendered compact and more or less impermeable to air and water, making it more difficult for reproduction to start and become established; the destruction of herbaceous vegetation increases erosion; many seedlings are killed by being trampled on; seeds are eaten and young plants are rooted up and destroyed by hogs; the crowns become elevated and the bark of saplings are gnawed and peeled, thus killing the trees.

There is but one principle safe to apply to grazing in the forest. It must be treated strictly subordinate to forestry as long as it is permitted on forest lands. If the woods are already a part of the pasture, a good plan for developing both phases is to fence off the more heavily timbered areas, leaving the lightly wooded portion in the pasture. This provides shade and protection for the livestock in summer and insures better and more profitable timber growing conditions.

\* \* \* \* \*

### TOUR OF AREA PLANNED FOR JULY 11TH

In the May issue of the Banner we stated that a tour of the Banister River Project would be conducted during June. This date has been changed and it has been definitely decided to hold this tour on Thursday, July 11th. It will be an all day affair and those making the trip should bring along lunch for a basket picnic on the way.

The schedule will be about as follows:

10:00 A.M. leave Soil Conservation Office

10 to 12 inspect field work

12 to 1:30 basket lunch

1:30 to 4:30 complete field inspection

We think the trip will be of interest to all of our cooperators since it will give them a better understanding of the work, and give them an opportunity to see how other cooperators are solving their erosion problems.

The Soil Conservation Service also extends a cordial invitation to any outside of the area who may be interested in the work. We would be glad to see a large group of farmers from every county in Piedmont Virginia, for we believe we can show them practical methods of controlling erosion on their own farms.

The May Banner stated that the tour would be held during the first part of June, and that two days might be taken. Please note the change - - July 11th, Everybody welcome, Everybody invited.

T E R R A C E

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W/ SMALL GRASS WITH GRASS  
AND CLOVER OR LESPEDeza

T E R R A C E

GLASS AND CLOVER 300  
OR LESPEDEZA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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# STRIP ROTATION (WITH TERRACES)



## AGRONOMY SUGGESTIONS

### Clip Weeds From New Seedlings

The long rainy period during the spring seeding season necessitated late sowing of many of the lespedeza, hay and pasture fields. As a result the weed crop made considerable growth before the young grass plants got started. It would be time well spent if each cooperator, who has fields of lespedeza, hay or pasture, would clip the weeds with a mower before they have time to ripen their seeds.

A great many of the weeds in the hay and pasture fields are annual plants, that is, they grow out each spring from the seeds which were produced the year before. It is obvious then, if they were clipped before the seeds mature, that the weed crop the following year would be greatly reduced. Not many farmers realize how much plant food and moisture a crop of weeds remove from the soil. By keeping them clipped the moisture and plant food are conserved for the young grass plants.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Sow More Soybeans, Cowpeas and Sudan Grass

Now is a good time to sow soybeans, cowpeas and sudan grass. These crops sown alone or in combination with each other make excellent hay crops. All three grow well during the hot, dry summer weather and make good hay when other crops fail. The beans and peas add nitrogen to the soil and improve the corn or small grain crop which follows them. Every cooperator should make a practice of seeding as many peas or beans as possible each year. Whether or not they are cut for hay, these crops will pay for themselves by increasing soil fertility for other crops. It is not necessary to inoculate the soil for the cowpeas, but the soybeans should always be inoculated when they are sown on soil which has not been planted to soybeans before. The inoculum is inexpensive and easy to apply.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Grazing New Pastures

The abundance of rainfall, which has fallen at almost regular intervals during the present growing season, has been very favorable to growth of the newly sown pastures. It may be a temptation to some of the cooperators to begin grazing these fields too early. It should be remembered that the young grass is just establishing itself and cannot withstand very much grazing. Newly seeded pastures should be grazed very judiciously, if at all, during the first growing season. Animals will crop the succulent young grass plants close down to the ground, but will leave the weeds untouched. This weakens the grass and gives the weeds a chance to become well established. Keep the stock off the pastures during the first season and the grasses will have a tendency to crowd out the weeds during succeeding years.



# CROPS HAVE THEIR WAY OF TELLING YOU WHAT THEY WANT



Plants can't talk but they have their own way of telling you what the condition of the soil must be if they are to grow into profitable crops. All that you need to do is to watch them while they are growing and then look at your pocketbook or bank account at harvest time.

From these two observations you will find that the condition of the soil must be right before there can be any profits. Few crops grow well in a strongly acid soil and most of them do not thrive when the soil is alkaline or sweet; over 95% of them flourish in soils that are slightly acid to neutral (pH 6 to pH 7).

It would be considered foolish to walk into a field and throw hard earned dollars into the winds. But that is exactly what happens when seed is sown on soil that is too acid or too alkaline.

The planting season is now at hand but it is not too late to have your County Agent test your soil and advise you as to its needs. If it is too acid apply the required amount of a quick-acting liming material before planting. If you leave a small area unlimed it will demonstrate the wisdom of your act.

S O I L E R O S I O N S E R V I C E  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Project No. 22 - Chatham, Va.

State and county allocations of 505 Civilian Conservation Corps camps assigned to the Soil Erosion Service for use in the national campaign against soil erosion by wind and rain were announced today by Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work.

About one-fourth of the 505 anti-erosion camps will be located in the seven High Plains states most severely hit by recurrent dust storms. The remainder will be distributed throughout the country in areas where soil impoverishment due to the erosive action of rain water is a major agricultural problem.

"In the acute wind erosion belt, which includes all or portions of North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico, the Service will supervise a total of 123 camps, most of which will be used to assist farmers in combating the dust storm problem." H. H. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Erosion Service, said today in explaining the Soil Erosion prevention program to be carried forward with CCC men. These camps will be engaged largely in the installation of terraces, dams, and other moisture conservation devices; the planting of cover crops to anchor the soil against blowing; and planting of trees and shrubs wherever feasible to serve as wind breaks.

"Most of the water erosion camps will be operated in conjunction with demonstration projects of the Soil Erosion Service. The work will consist largely of applying to the land measures of erosion control found suitable to conditions in each locality by technical experts of the Service. This will include the sloping of gully banks and planting of erosion-resisting vegetation; the construction of check-dams for moisture conservation and gully control; tree planting; forest conservation and other land improvement activities.

"The augmented CCC force now available to the Soil Erosion Service will make possible a material expansion of the land conservation work started some 18 months ago. With the camps now at our disposal we feel that long strides can be taken in curbing the destructive force which is costing farmers of this country \$400,000,000 annually in lost productivity of the soil.

"Our experience in the past has demonstrated that the Civilian Conservation Corps is a major weapon in carrying the anti-erosion program forward on the land itself. The men of these camps have carried out extensive erosion control work in connection with our demonstration projects throughout the country. They have completed control work on miles of land-destroying gullies, planted millions of soil-holding trees, and built hundreds of thousands of check-dams to curb the cutting power of running water. This work can now be carried forward on a greatly enlarged scale.

"Of the camps where work is now to be carried on under supervision of the Soil Erosion Service, fifty-five are old camps operated heretofore by the Service itself; 150 are old camps formerly operated by the Forest Service but recently transferred to the Soil Erosion Service; and 300 are new camps created under the expanded CCC program."

State and county locations of Virginia's new soil erosion camps are as follows:

VIRGINIA (6) : Franklin, Henry, Campbell, Halifax, Mecklenburg and Dinwiddie Counties.